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Chairperson: Ms. Intelmann ..... (Estonia)
later: Mr. Fonseca (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Brazil)
later: Ms. Intelmann (Chairperson) ..... (Estonia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 53: Sustainable development

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/61/93, 126 and 258; A/C.2/61/4)

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/61/72-E/2006/54, A/61/75-E/2006/49 and A/61/76-E/2006/51; A/61/181, 268 and 277)

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/61/229 and Corr.1; A/C.2/61/CRP.1)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (A/61/225)

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (A/61/225)

(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its ninth special session (A/61/25 (Supp. No. 25) and 322)

1. **Mr. Civili** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs) said that the award of the Nobel Peace Prize for efforts to achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development highlighted the inextricable link between development and peace. The concept of sustainable development had evolved into an overarching and internationally agreed framework for promoting economic growth, advancing social development and protecting the environment. Government leaders had reaffirmed their determination to ensure the full and timely realization of sustainable development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, at the 2005 World Summit. The General Assembly continued to play an important role in guiding global efforts in that regard.

2. Sustainable development had become a truly global undertaking. While national Governments remained key actors, a wide range of other actors — civil society, business, industry and local authorities — were playing a growing implementation role. While many Governments had taken the lead in moving implementation forward, action had been taken locally too. An increasing number of municipal governments were adopting initiatives in such areas as fighting climate change and, through a global network of 675 local governments, many cities had established greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and were implementing climate protection policies. The business sector was increasingly realizing that social and environmental issues affected long-term profitability and sometimes impacted on shareholder value. Progress was also being made on education, which was key for sustainable development. A growing number of undergraduate, graduate and doctorate-level courses were being offered in universities in both developing and developed countries, enabling tomorrow's leaders to be trained in sustainable development.

3. The Commission on Sustainable Development had been reorienting its work in line with emerging implementation trends and as part of wider United Nations reform. The General Assembly provided overall policy guidance, the Economic and Social Council focused on its system-wide central coordinating function, and the Commission advanced implementation through its two-year thematic cycle. As Governments, civil society and the business community were taking concrete initiatives, they expected the United Nations to produce concrete results and have a real impact on the ground. That expectation had been driving the work of the Commission, which was currently concentrating on energy, industry, air pollution, atmosphere and climate change.

4. Access to modern energy services was critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Pursuit of energy efficiency would lower energy consumption, enhance energy savings, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase industrial competitiveness. Renewable energy played an important role in that regard. Most countries would continue to rely mainly on fossil fuels, demand for which was expected to keep growing. The challenges were, therefore, not only environmental but affected economic growth and society as a whole, which in turn impacted on the environment.

5. While there was no single solution, sustainable development provided the best strategy for tackling

those challenges. Developing and disseminating advanced clean energy technologies would be a priority and sharing such technologies with developing countries, with due consideration for intellectual property rights, must be an integral component of any global strategy to combat climate change. Increased financial resources, including ODA, must be mobilized to help developing countries meet growing energy demand, invest in advanced clean energy and low carbon technologies, and cover the costs of adaptation to climate change. Small island developing States were especially vulnerable to climate change; their resilience needed to be built and their vulnerability reduced.

6. While emerging trends in sustainable development were encouraging, the need to expedite progress on implementation remained urgent. Partnerships would maximize the impact of action and develop tools to help marshal new resources and new means of implementation. He called on the Committee to focus on providing strategically oriented political guidance on how to move implementation forward.

7. **Mr. Egeland** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/61/229 and Corr.1) and the Global Survey of Early Warning Systems (A/C.2/61/CRP.1), noted that 2006 was above average in terms of number of disasters. By August, there had been 267 reported disasters affecting 91 million people. That was more than 30 disasters above average. The situation could become even worse. Earthquakes threatened to take more lives and destroy more livelihoods, mainly because of greater urban concentration and greater vulnerability, while the El Niño phenomenon currently developing in the Pacific might bring more droughts and floods in the coming year. One of the most feared results of global warming — greater intensity and frequency of extreme weather events — seemed to have already arrived.

8. However, as the Secretary-General's report showed, there were signs that Governments, organizations and citizens recognized the problem and were increasingly taking steps to reduce disaster risk. The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters had created a paradigm shift in the way in which the challenge posed by natural hazards was addressed. The report highlighted many examples of efforts to build community resilience. Risk awareness and education were also on national agendas, with initiatives to build knowledge of local hazards and risks through primary and secondary education. At the international level, national concerns were being matched by new thinking. Disaster risk reduction policies and practices offered proven win-win approaches for adapting to changing climate risks. The Global Survey of Early Warning Systems, meanwhile, contained strong recommendations for implementing a globally comprehensive early warning system.

9. To make real progress, States must abide by their commitments under the Hyogo Framework. Noting the acknowledgement by States that they bore primary responsibility for effective implementation of that Framework, he said that an increasing number of countries were engaging actively. Since the report had been written, the number of Governments that had officially nominated focal points for implementation had risen to 87. Such focal points enhanced multi-stakeholder as well as regional and international coordination. Noting that momentum must be underpinned by greater investment, he called on bilateral and multilateral financing institutions to provide the necessary resources and welcomed the new facility created by the World Bank.

10. It was also important to strengthen global and regional capacity. Over the past year, he had overseen the strengthening of the Strategy system. There had also been intensive consultations with Governments through the Strategy Support Group and at the Economic and Social Council's 2006 substantive session. The strengthened arrangements would provide an evaluation of progress on disaster risk reduction; improve the coherence of international action through closer collaboration and teamwork; and systematically advocate risk and vulnerability reduction and share knowledge among practitioners and experts. The main forum of the strengthened arrangements was the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which would enable a wider range of partners to participate in providing technical guidance and support to the Strategy system. He looked forward to the active engagement of national experts in the preparation and conduct of the first session of the Global Platform, to be held in June 2007.

11. He expressed appreciation to all those Governments that supported the United Nations Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction, but strongly invited them

to strengthen the size and predictability of their commitments. The Strategy secretariat did not receive any funding from the United Nations regular budget. He hoped that the Committee would be making recommendations in that regard.

12. **Mr. de Boer** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), introducing his report on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (contained in document A/61/225), said that international cooperation on climate change had made important advances over the past year with the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, the Gleneagles meeting of the Group of Eight, the 2005 World Summit and, most recently, the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Montreal in late 2005, serving as the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the first Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. At that Meeting, the Parties had adopted 36 decisions, approved compliance procedures and elected the members of the compliance committee.

13. Of the Protocols' three market-based mechanisms, the clean development mechanism had seen exponential growth over the past year. The number of registered projects had grown to 356 by October 2006, with over 800 more in the pipeline. The latter were expected to generate over 1.4 billion tons of emission reductions by 2012, while it was estimated that the carbon market would reach $30 billion by the end of 2006. However, carbon markets needed long-term certainty beyond 2012.

14. The next United Nations Climate Change Conference, to be held in Nairobi, was expected to decide to make joint implementation fully operational as the second project-based mechanism, the infrastructure for which had been put in place in 2006. Work was also under way to further strengthen the clean development mechanism and broaden its sectoral and geographical coverage. Many African countries, in particular, needed to be able to participate more fully in the mechanism. The secretariat of the Framework Convention was working with partners in the United Nations system to increase capacity-building efforts and engage key actors, most importantly in the private sector. In Nairobi, the Parties were expected to reach agreement on the activities to be carried out until 2008 under the five-year work programme for the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. They were also expected to make recommendations to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) on issues to be improved in the context of the review of the financial mechanism. A critical vehicle for supporting activities in developing countries was the Adaptation Fund, which was to be financed partly by the proceeds from the clean development mechanism; political agreement in Nairobi on management of the Fund was key to making progress on adaptation. A decision was expected in Nairobi on the results of the review of the process to review the technology transfer framework and the terms of reference for the Expert Group on Technology Transfer.

15. The two-track approach to discussions to determine the future directions of global action on climate change involved the establishment of an open-ended ad hoc working group under the Kyoto Protocol and the initiation of a dialogue process under the Convention. Both those initiatives would need to consider long-term mitigation and adaptation efforts and how to lower the cost of implementing commitments in the future and use those savings to green economic growth, stimulate technology flows, build capacity and pay for adaptation, perhaps leading to a self-financing climate compact.

16. Recalling the decision taken in Montreal to continue the institutional linkage of the secretariat of the Framework Convention to the United Nations until such time as a review was deemed necessary by either the Conference of the Parties or the General Assembly, he said that the secretariat of the Framework Convention was working with its United Nations system partners to mainstream climate change into wider development policy. Climate change was integrally linked to sustainable development and extended into the economic sphere. Adaptation to climate change was linked to disaster reduction efforts, food security, water availability and population health, while climate change mitigation was related to efforts to ensure energy security. The challenge would be met only by addressing the broader context, and that required global action and leadership.

17. Such leadership was sorely needed. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), $17 trillion needed to be invested in the energy sector in the next 25 to 30 years in order to achieve economic growth and poverty eradication. Such investment must be sustainable. In the next 5 to 10 years, 40 per cent of the

world's power-generating capacity would be replaced and the decisions to be taken would be the international community's legacy for the next 30 to 50 years. According to a leading economist, if the wrong choices were made, climate change would cause a market failure larger than that experienced during the First and Second World Wars and the Depression combined, delaying attainment of the Millennium Development Goals for several more generations. Everyone recognized the issue and knew that solutions were within reach. Leadership meant not waiting for others to act first, but assuming common but differentiated responsibilities.

18. **Mr. Djoghlaf** (Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity), introducing his report (contained in document A/61/225), said that the loss of biodiversity continued unabated. Three species disappeared every hour and 20 hectares of forest every minute. According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, climate change was a root cause of biodiversity loss. Humanity was on the eve of one of the greatest species extinctions since the beginning of life on Earth, and the first generated by humans. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002, Heads of State and Government had undertaken to substantially reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, that objective was achievable, provided the international community redoubled its efforts.

19. That call had been heard. He mentioned, in particular, the decision taken at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety regarding documentation accompanying shipments of living modified organisms intended for direct use as food or feed or for processing, making the Biosafety Protocol fully operational; the adoption at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of measures ushering in an enhanced implementation phase of the Convention; the decision by the President of Brazil to place 6.4 million hectares of the Amazon rainforest under environmental protection; the establishment of a Heads of Agencies Task Force on the 2010 Biodiversity Target; the decision by 10 major botanical gardens to join forces in the Convention's enhanced implementation phase; the decision taken at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in Curitiba, to conclude negotiations on the international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing by 2010; the call made by over 122 Ministers in Curitiba for biodiversity to be integrated into the development sector; the Secretary-General's proposal that the 2010 biodiversity target should be included in Millennium Development Goal 7; the request by the President of the Group of 77 that a multi-year programme of action should be adopted to promote South-South cooperation for implementation of the Convention; the adoption at the Conference on Biodiversity in European Development Cooperation, held in Paris in September 2006, of the Message from Paris, integrating biodiversity into European development cooperation; and, lastly, the recent decision by Timor-Leste to deposit its instrument of ratification, thus becoming the 189th party to the Convention. Noting that the Convention needed to be universal and that no State could afford to be a mere observer when it came to protecting life on earth, he called on those States that had not yet done so to join the Convention. The General Assembly was urged to proclaim 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity.

20. **Mr. Obermeyer** (United Nations Environment Programme), speaking on behalf of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), said that the sustainable use of natural resources was a prerequisite for ensuring a sound development path for mankind. On Ecological Debt Day on 9 October, it had been announced that for the remainder of 2006 the rate of consumption of natural resources would exceed the planet's ability to produce them. Natural resources would simply not be able to provide economic benefits indefinitely. The decline in ecosystem services had affected the well-being of people everywhere, but mainly the most vulnerable populations. It had also led to insecurity in areas where competition for scarce resources exacerbated the effects of poverty.

21. Climate change increasingly produced extreme weather-related disasters, and the frequency of such occurrences would increase. Many more people, mostly poor, lived in environments that were exposed to natural disasters. The continued demand for raw materials by newly industrialized countries had placed further strain on the environment, despite wide acknowledgement that current unsustainable production and consumption patterns needed to be altered.

22. He highlighted some key issues related to the outcome of the ninth special session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and the question of universal membership of that body, with special reference to the endorsement of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), and the participants' focus on the environmental aspects of energy and tourism. In his report on the question of universal membership (A/61/322), the Secretary-General had concluded that further reflection should be accorded to the issue, once the reform of United Nations environmental activities had been more fully discussed. In the few months since the Executive Director had assumed office, UNEP had initiated a number of internal reforms aimed at becoming more responsive to its mandate, as well as to the needs of member States. The Programme had endeavoured to establish strategic partnerships with other United Nations entities in order to collectively ensure environmental sustainability and a strategic presence in the countries in which UNEP operated. Partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other agencies was rapidly developing and, in the case of UNDP, would involve the creation of a joint poverty and environment centre in Nairobi, collaboration on the Global Environment Facility (GEF), greater harmonization of financial and administrative systems, and cooperation in the compilation of the next Human Development Report .

23. The implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building had been mainstreamed throughout the UNEP work programme for the current biennium and fully integrated into the proposed programme of work and budget for the period 2008-2009. Furthermore, UNEP had begun discussions with Governments on proposals to raise the policy relevance of the Forum.

24. At its twenty-fourth session, the Governing Council was expected to discuss economic governance. In that context, the Executive Director looked forward to the report of the Secretary-General on the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment, and the resumption of the work of the Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for United Nations Environmental Activities. The deliberations of the General Assembly would be crucial in establishing institutional road maps for meeting the challenges of environmental deterioration, and setting operational guidelines for the improvement of environmental capacity-building and conservation, and the availability of green technologies.

25. **Ms. Zia** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, called on developed countries to cooperate with countries of the South in research and development activities, in order to facilitate the transfer of appropriate and advanced technology to improve the access of the poor to technology, and to boost the capacity of developing countries to develop environmentally sound technology.

26. The organization of work of the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and its preparatory meeting should reflect the decision taken during the eleventh session of the Commission to treat all the issues identified in Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation as equally important. Enough time should be allocated for negotiations and, to that end, the document under negotiation should be circulated to participants no later than the beginning of the session.

27. A strong political will and sense of national ownership was vital to the effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, and the resources available for implementation should be scaled up. The Group of 77 and China called on the international community to provide the necessary support and resources to transform the vulnerability of small island developing States into strength, creativity, resilience and leadership.

28. Developing countries had become increasingly disaster-prone and additional support was needed. Development partners could help them to set appropriate regulations for reaching the objectives in five priorities identified in the Hyogo Framework for Action.

29. The Group of 77 and China reaffirmed the need to address the adverse effects of climate change, and especially the adaptation of developing countries, which needed increased know-how and enhanced capacity to implement international commitments and derive greater benefits from the clean development mechanism. Developed countries were urged to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and intensify their efforts to ensure its effective implementation. The industrialized countries must fulfil their commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. International cooperation

should be accelerated, especially through the mechanism.

30. The majority of States parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity were also members of the Group of 77 and they fully recognized the crucial role of biodiversity in their development. The Group attached the highest importance to the speedy, balanced and mutually supportive implementation of the objectives of the Convention and welcomed the recent decisions pertaining to implementation of instruments governing the environment. It also supported the proposal to designate 2010 as a year in which to commemorate the protection of international biodiversity, and welcomed the convening of an expert group to draft a work plan on South-South cooperation.

31. In conclusion, the Group expressed support for the UNEP Governing Council and its decisions, and looked forward to the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. It called on the international community to provide the necessary financial support and cooperation for the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan.

32. *Mr. Fonseca (Brazil), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

33. **Ms. Toro** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia; and, in addition, Moldova and Ukraine, reiterated their firm commitment to the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the 2005 World Summit. The Informal Consultative Process represented an important starting point in the process of creating a strong and efficient framework for environmental governance at the international level and should be resumed.

34. UNEP should be upgraded, with a revised mandate, and supported by stable, predictable financial contributions, operating on an equal footing with other United Nations agencies. As a specialized agency, UNEP would be better able to provide leadership in facing current and future environmental challenges.

35. The European Union supported the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in document A/61/258 for deeper commitment to sustainable development by redoubling efforts to implement Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. In addition, it hoped for a successful outcome to the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which was expected to achieve working policy solutions on the thematic cluster, as well as further insight into their interlinkages and impact on sustainable development.

36. Improved access to reliable and affordable energy was a critical factor in meeting the Millennium Development Goals, and the European Union wished to promote the integration of energy issues into national development plans. It encouraged others to follow its example with respect to setting national and regional targets for energy efficiency and for the share of renewable energies in energy supply and consumption. In terms of industrial development, efforts should be intensified to enhance sustainable consumption, production patterns and management of natural resources, and an integrated approach should be taken in tackling air pollution and climate change.

37. The European Union had worked for a long time with small island developing States to address environmental challenges and their particular vulnerabilities to climate change. Recent disasters had highlighted the need to develop and strengthen effective disaster risk reduction, early warning systems, emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction capacities, adaptation measures and technology in those States.

38. The European Union welcomed the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and endorsed the processes under way to strengthen the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system. It endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendation on the need for further investment in climate monitoring, and associated hazard risk management and risk reduction activities in coping with hydro-meteorological hazards and on the inclusion of disaster reduction in national climate change adaptation policies and programmes. The international community should develop tools to measure levels of investment in preparedness, particularly at the national level, and to integrate indigenous knowledge into the design and implementation of preparedness activities.

39. The European Union welcomed the outcome of the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to

the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. New strategies should be explored in a manner that recognized the urgency of addressing climate change and the scale of action required. The European Union was also eager to discuss further commitments for developed countries under the Kyoto Protocol and to engage in a full review of the Protocol.

40. Climate policy should support other sustainable development goals and enhance cooperation for capacity-building, technology transfer and international assistance to help developing countries manage the impact of climate change and develop resilience. At the national level, measures to mitigate the impact of climate change, such as scaling up low carbon energy, would promote poverty reduction and the achievement of the Goals.

41. The current debate on strengthening the Convention to Combat Desertification and its implementation was of great significance, and further efforts should be made to tackle land degradation and its links to poverty. The seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in October 2005, had led to the formulation of a strategic vision for improving the implementation of the Convention in the following decade. To that end, the European Union was working with its partners in an intersessional working group. The global environment dimension of desertification and, consequently, the need for integrating the Rio Conventions in a mutually supportive approach should also be considered within a development perspective.

42. Women in poor rural areas disproportionately bore the burden and disadvantages of environmental degradation in performing their daily chores. They also had a special potential for fostering rural development because they worked with natural resources every day. The European Union therefore welcomed the international meetings held in China and Mali in 2006 on the role of women and young people in combating desertification.

43. Stressing the European Union's commitment to reducing the loss of biodiversity by 2010, she drew attention to the need to strengthen national conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity, and to find ways and means to overcome obstacles, and assist in the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans. In particular, support must be given, where applicable, to the integration of such plans into nationally owned development programmes and effective mechanisms established to monitor progress towards the 2010 target. It was noteworthy that, at the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety held in March 2006, ministers and business leaders had established a dialogue for the first time. The European Union also recognized the key role of the Convention on Biological Diversity in supporting the work of the General Assembly on conservation and the sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

44. Many participants in the ninth special session of the UNEP Governing Council had evidently felt the need for a more focused and clear role for UNEP as the environment pillar of the United Nations system. She welcomed the appointment of the Executive Director of UNEP and pledged the European Union's wholehearted support.

45. The adoption of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management was a major achievement; the initial steps to rationalize and consolidate multilateral environmental agreements had been taken within the chemicals and wastes cluster. The European Union was also committed to participating in capacity-building strategies for developing countries in environmental protection, as a tool for strengthening international environmental governance.

46. In view of trends in urban development and their impact on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the European Union enthusiastically endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendation to accord high priority to the integration of slum improvement into national development and poverty reduction strategies for the attainment of the Goals.

47. **Mr. Hannesson** (Iceland) said that his delegation was satisfied with the outcome of the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and held high expectations for the Commission's policy session to be held in April and May 2007. The international community faced the challenge of finding a way to safeguard the world's ecosystems while raising the level of development and fostering economic growth. Over the long term, countries would have to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels and substantially expand the consumption of renewables.

48. An enabling policy framework and leadership were required to promote the use of renewable energy sources. International financial institutions should be encouraged to raise the profile of renewables in their lending strategies. His delegation had therefore been pleased to hear the announcement by the representative of the World Bank that the Bank was developing a Clean Energy Investment Framework to meet the challenge of securing affordable and cost-effective energy for growth while preserving the environment. His delegation also commended the World Bank for its plan to explore financing options to support investment in clean energy.

49. Geothermal energy and hydropower accounted for over 70 per cent of Iceland's primary energy consumption. His country had a long-standing commitment to international cooperation for the sustainable use of energy, and the Geothermal Training Programme of the United Nations University, hosted by Iceland, was valuable for sharing expertise with developing countries.

50. He underscored the importance of advancing progress in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. His delegation was pleased to note that regional infrastructure had been strengthened and that the three regions involved had all identified targets and priorities for implementation. It looked forward to studying the outcome of their work in a consolidated format, which would serve as a guide for cooperation in the successful implementation of the Strategy. The initial pledge his country had made in Mauritius to support implementation projects and programmes was the beginning of a fruitful partnership and cooperation on its part.

51. *Ms. Intelmann (Estonia) resumed the Chair.*

52. **Mr. Jenie** (Indonesia) noted the increasing awareness that the challenges of poverty alleviation, environmental protection and balanced development could be met only through concerted and coordinated global action. Although some progress had been made in many countries, one third of the world's population still lived in poverty. Considering the growing global demand for natural resources and the frequency of extreme weather phenomena and natural disasters, fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation was crucial for sustainable development. While there seemed to be a deepening commitment and renewed impetus to sustainable development at all levels, some risks remained. The Kyoto Protocol should be made fully operational to curb the impacts of climate change, particularly in the most vulnerable and disaster-prone countries.

53. Indonesia expressed deep appreciation to the international community for its continued support and looked forward to the completion of the early warning system. It was also important to continue supporting Indonesia's efforts in risk reduction, disaster management, awareness-raising and reconstruction and rehabilitation of Aceh and North Sumatra. Indonesia identified with the concerns and challenges of small island developing States. In the context of South-South cooperation, it had been working with those countries in the area of coastal management and was ready to support them in their implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. It had launched a national programme aimed at building the capacity of local governments to conserve natural resources and control environmental degradation. Indonesia attached great importance to the conservation and management of its biodiversity and was looking forward to the completion of the international regime on access and benefit sharing, one of the three pillars of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It was important for the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building to be fully implemented through concrete actions with predictable, adequate and stable funding.

54. **Ms. Radu** (Moldova) said that her country's current priorities included implementation of the European Union Water Framework Directive, protection of its biodiversity, management of obsolete organic pollutants and effective land management. Several projects were being implemented accordingly. For example, Moldova would export a substantial amount of obsolete pollutants left over from the Soviet era for recycling and undertake another project to mitigate the organic pollution of its waters and of the Black Sea North-West region by protecting land against erosion and establishing waste management procedures in rural areas. It was a member of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and had been the first country to ratify the Aarhus Convention on providing citizens with information on environmental issues. It used the mechanisms of the Helsinki Convention on the Protection and Use of

Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes to establish modern-style relations with neighbours with whom it shared watercourses.

55. At the national level, Moldova was trying to enrich its forest coverage through tree planting and protection of wetlands. A new law was expected to be passed to help protect its biodiversity. Despite those efforts, it still faced many challenges, such as the non-integration of environmental issues into economic and social policies, poverty, corruption and lack of awareness among decision makers of the Johannesburg Summit decisions. However, the Government and many environmental NGOs had been making efforts to improve that situation.

56. **Mr. Severin** (Saint Lucia), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), said that, given the special difficulties they faced in achieving sustainable development, AOSIS countries continued to attach the highest priority to the Mauritius Strategy. The report of the Secretary-General (A/61/277) acknowledged those countries' readiness to take measures to continue implementing the Strategy at the national and regional levels and noted that greater efforts should be made to mainstream issues related to those countries in the programmes of the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. AOSIS had held regional meetings to consider the global programme to operationalize the Strategy. It welcomed efforts made at the Inter-Regional Meeting held in Rome the previous year to decide on common action to implement the Strategy. Various regional organizations had been identified to provide the necessary support for monitoring implementation. AOSIS urged its development partners and the broader international community to commit the resources necessary to bolster those organizations. It welcomed the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development to dedicate one day of its sessions every other year to reviewing the implementation of the Strategy and strongly encouraged the Commission to continue emphasizing issues pertaining to small island developing States at review sessions.

57. While the AOSIS countries bore the primary responsibility for their sustainable development, expressed commitments by the international community must be matched by determined action based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities in respect of sustainable development. AOSIS acknowledged the ongoing efforts of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs to operationalize the Strategy and called on all relevant agencies of the United Nations system to work with and support the Department in those efforts.

58. Efforts were needed to improve the capacity of small island developing States for research, data collection and analysis and other technical competencies, in order to facilitate the formulation and implementation of public policies and programmes for their sustainable development. In that regard, AOSIS welcomed the efforts to promote new and renewable sources of energy. Constantly rising oil prices and market instability, inefficiencies in energy generation and transmission and almost total dependence on fossil fuels were major sources of economic vulnerability for AOSIS countries. They therefore counted on the support of international partners in their ongoing efforts to develop policies and programmes to foster the use of renewable energy and lessen the impact of climate change.

59. Preparatory action in small island developing States to deal with extreme weather phenomena attributable to climate change would enhance the prospects for an effective response before, during and after serious weather conditions and other natural disasters. Various national and regional projects to address the challenges and threats of climate change were under way. At the international level, AOSIS urged all countries to support the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol and called on developed countries to express their full support for efforts to give prominence to the Strategy.

60. While the establishment of the upgraded Central Emergency Response Fund was a positive development, there was still a need for improved and rapid humanitarian response, especially with regard to financing, to ensure that funds were readily available and disbursed in a timely manner to disaster-stricken countries. AOSIS expressed gratitude to the Small Island Developing States Unit in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for facilitating the preparatory process for its regional and interregional meetings the previous year. It reiterated the need for the urgent strengthening of the Unit. It also expressed concern about the deterioration of the Small Island Developing States Information Network and continued to press for its revitalization and strengthening.

61. **Mr. Torrington** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the Group's members stood ready to participate constructively in the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The next Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting should continue to discuss policy issues identified in the review year. The four issues under discussion were all important and should be treated on an equal footing and in a balanced manner, taking into account the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Since the fifteenth session would be a negotiating session, the Chairman's negotiating document should be available at the beginning of the session at the latest. The Group would like to maintain the practice of separate reports on cluster issues in order for each issue to be treated in its entirety. It highlighted the importance of the preparatory process at the regional level for the main sessions of the Commission and of the intergovernmental character of the process.

62. The Group reiterated its commitment to the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and fully supported the declaration of 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity. In that context, there was a need for fair and equitable sharing of the benefits of genetic resources and for the conclusion of negotiations on a binding international regime on access and benefit-sharing at the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties. The Group supported the work of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing and encouraged it to strive for a just and fair agreement.

63. The Group welcomed the adoption of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and reiterated the need to support developing countries in strengthening their capacity for the sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes. While the adoption of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building was a positive step, the Plan faced serious constraints in its implementation, due mainly to limited financial resources.

64. The Group was concerned that lives and resources were lost every year owing to natural disasters and noted the importance of scientific and technological cooperation to help its countries develop early warning systems, contingency plans and adaptation strategies. The adverse effects of climate change represented a serious challenge for the sustainable development of its region. The clean development mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol was a step in the right direction, even though capacity-building and advisory services were needed to successfully design and obtain approval of relevant projects. Desertification and land degradation were other serious threats, with potentially devastating effects in terms of social, environmental and economic costs.

65. The Group was committed to the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification and had organized awareness-raising events in connection with the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. It welcomed the establishment of the Caribbean Sea Commission by the Association of Caribbean States and encouraged the international community to support endeavours to promote the Caribbean Sea Initiative.

66. **Mr. Sadykov** (Kazakhstan) said that implementation of the programmes and targets adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development was of paramount importance.

67. Energy played a critical role in reducing poverty, ensuring sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Because energy supplies based on fossil fuels would continue to play a dominant role, efforts were needed to develop cleaner technologies and more effective exploration methods with respect to such fuels. Additional cooperation to eliminate gas flaring and venting would contribute significantly to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving energy and ensuring increased energy supplies.

68. Both the plan of action on global energy security adopted at the Group of Eight Summit held in July 2006 in Saint Petersburg and the inauguration that same month of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline for the export of crude oil would make valuable contributions towards meeting world energy requirements and other key objectives relating to the environment and development. It was important for developed countries to help developing countries to diversify their energy technologies and equipment in order to enable them to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels.

69. He drew attention to initiatives his country had introduced to diversify its economy in a manner consistent with sustainable development, improve energy efficiency and develop alternative sources of

energy. In addition, a code harmonizing national environmental law with international norms was slated for adoption in 2006.

70. His Government attached considerable importance to international cooperation in implementing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and was in the process of ratifying the Kyoto Protocol to the Convention. Wider use of the Protocol's clean development mechanism would boost national efforts to develop ecologically friendly and effective energy resources, and the mechanism should be simplified.

71. **Mr. Karanja** (Kenya) said that his delegation welcomed the fact that the various stakeholders had embraced sustainable development initiatives globally. It also welcomed initiatives being taken in his country by foreign companies in partnership with his Government and Kenyan companies under the clean development mechanism. Governments should play the lead role and encourage the involvement of other stakeholders. The achievement of sustainable development required full implementation of the commitments made in that regard by the international community.

72. Desertification, which continued to pose serious challenges to sustainable development, had not received due attention. The international community should support the efforts of countries seriously affected by drought and desertification, including by ratifying and fully implementing the Convention to Combat Desertification.

73. His Government reaffirmed its commitment to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It had undertaken various relevant legislative reforms following consultative and participatory processes involving key stakeholders and civil society organizations. The many challenges ahead could be addressed through renewed political will and the establishment of genuine partnerships to promote sustainable development.

74. The United Nations regional commissions should be strengthened so that they would be in a position to provide effective support for sustainable development, as called for in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

75. UNEP must be strengthened gradually in order not to place immediate demands on the United Nations system and Member States, and should retain its current mandate. All Member States should participate in the process. The work of UNEP was being severely hampered by a lack of reliable financial support. The General Assembly should increase the regular budget resources available to the Programme. The failure to reach a decision on the issue of establishing universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum would continue to divert attention from pressing environmental issues as well as time and resources of Member States, and a final decision should be reached as soon as possible. His delegation called for the full implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, which was a milestone in the work of UNEP.

76. **Mr. Shamanov** (Russian Federation) said that the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development should lead to the development of balanced and practically oriented political decisions. Practical decisions by the Commission on the issue of energy security would be an important contribution to the joint efforts of the international community on the indissolubly linked issues of climate and energy security.

77. His delegation had noted with satisfaction the outcome of the ninth special session of UNEP, in February 2006. The Programme had been given a new impetus in terms of qualitatively improving its work through the efforts of its new Executive Director, Mr. Achim Steiner. Work on protection of the environment had to be carried out within the intergovernmental process, with the participation of all Member States and on the basis of consensus; it was essential to integrate into that process consideration of the future recommendations of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment.

78. The Russian Federation had traditionally given priority attention to the Global Forest Agenda, and supported the outcome of the sixth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests. On the issue of global climate protection, it was expedient to utilize all forms of cooperation, with the widest possible participation, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto

Protocol. Belarus had committed itself to a 5 per cent reduction in its greenhouse gas emissions in the period 2008-2012. The Russian Federation welcomed and supported that initiative and was convinced that measures to counteract climate change had to be based on the common efforts of all countries in proportion to their real opportunities and influence on climate change. Noting with general satisfaction the outcome of the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention and the first Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, the Russian Federation considered that the second Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, to be held in Nairobi in November 2006 in conjunction with the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention, would give practical impetus to the joint efforts of the international community on all three of its basic negotiating tracks. The Russian Federation favoured reinforcing the scientific basis of climate cooperation, developing the relevant global networks for observation, monitoring and improving forecasting.

79. The Russian Federation supported implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification, and considered it necessary to improve coordination and constructive interaction between the two Conventions and other international conventions and structures. It had noted with interest the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/61/229), and welcomed proposals to reform the Strategy system in the spirit of the Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005-2015. Activity in the area of disaster reduction must in the first instance involve the relevant organizations in the area of development, which themselves operated at country level and at the request of Governments.

80. **Mr. Bialek** (Australia) said that his country strongly supported the work of the United Nations on sustainable development and was particularly pleased that it would be representing the Group of Western European and Other States on the Bureau of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fifteenth session.

81. Progress in the areas of energy, industrial development, air pollution and climate change would occur only if countries worked towards integrated solutions. Political stability, effective political and institutional governance and a policy environment conducive to growth, along with partnerships between Governments and the private sector, were essential for achieving sustainable development.

82. Collaborative partnerships between countries were equally important, particularly on energy policy, in order to enable countries with smaller economies to adopt new ideas and best practices, promote local innovation and create an environment conducive to the development and use of new technologies. Australia was actively involved in a number of partnerships, including the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate.

83. In keeping with its commitment to helping its partner countries achieve sustainable development by addressing environmental challenges, Australia was developing a new environment strategy for its aid programme focusing on climate change and adaptation, water and environmental regulatory regimes.

84. His country was participating actively in ongoing efforts in various forums to improve the framework for international environmental governance, and believed that environment, sustainable development and natural resource management must be mainstreamed into the development programmes of the United Nations. It therefore welcomed the efforts of UNEP under the Bali Strategic Plan to mainstream environmental concerns and rationalize programme delivery in coordination with UNDP. Australia also awaited with interest the outcome of the deliberations of the High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment.

85. **Mr. González Pérez** (Cuba) said that an unequal and unjust world economic and financial system, which was a product of neoliberal economics, continued to hinder the implementation of sustainable development strategies, seriously undermining economic development, social equality and environmental protection. He cited statistics illustrating the severity of the continuing deterioration of the environment and of the heavy toll it was taking in the developing world, all at a time when military expenditures continued to skyrocket.

86. Inadequate financial resources, technology transfers and support for capacity-building continued to prevent the developing countries from achieving the objectives of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development

Goals. Moreover, there was no clear sign that the developed countries had the intention or political will required to redress that situation, and they refused even to acknowledge the important principle of common but differentiated responsibility for climate protection. It was therefore imperative that the developed countries fulfil their commitments to devote 0.7 per cent of GDP to ODA, grant the products of developing countries greater access to their markets, transfer and share know-how and cutting-edge technologies, and refrain from evading their responsibilities. Bilateral and subregional arrangements to promote sustainable development should not be a substitute for multilateral international cooperation to that end.

87. His delegation urged the international community to devote particular attention to the needs of small island developing States, whose economic situation had deteriorated significantly owing to drastic cuts in ODA and unforeseen natural disasters.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations A/C.2/61/SR.20

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Chairperson: Ms. Intelmann ..... (Estonia)
later: Mr. Fonseca (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Brazil)
later: Ms. Intelmann (Chairperson) ..... (Estonia)

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06-58451 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 55: Globalization and interdependence (*continued*) (A/61/486)

(e) Integration of the economies in transition into the world economy (*continued*) (A/61/269, A/61/93, A/61/126, A/61/181 and A/C.2/61/L.11*)

Draft resolution on integration of the economies in transition into the world economy

1. **Mr. Rachkov** (Belarus), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/61/L.11*, noted that the unprecedented systemic transformation in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States was still under way, some 14 years after the General Assembly had adopted its first resolution on the integration of economies in transition into the world economy. Some countries had achieved significant progress and were even emerging as donors, but many of them still faced socio-economic difficulties. Some small transition countries had even experienced a decline in economic and social indicators related to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

2. International assistance to transition countries should remain an important element of international cooperation for development and a topical issue on the United Nations agenda. Accordingly, paragraphs 6 to 9 of the draft resolution sought to strengthen international cooperation, particularly for infrastructure development; promote fair conditions of international trade and facilitate membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) for transition countries; and ensure that the interests of such countries were taken into account in the process of reforming the international financial architecture. Assistance to enable countries to complete the transition would make an important contribution to the global development process.

Agenda item 53: Sustainable development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/61/258, A/61/93, A/61/126 and A/C.2/61/4)

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*continued*) (A/61/268, A/61/277, A/61/72-E/2006/54, A/61/75-E/2006/49, A/61/76-E/2006/51 and A/61/181)

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (*continued*) (A/61/229, A/61/229/Corr.1 and A/C.2/61/CRP.1)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (*continued*) (A/61/225)

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*) (A/61/225)

(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its ninth special session (*continued*) (A/61/25 and A/61/322)

3. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), introducing the reports of the Secretary-General on implementation of the Mauritius Strategy (A/61/277) and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/61/229), outlined the efforts made by his Office, to enhance its role of advocacy and mobilization of support for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Those efforts included highlighting small island developing State issues in meetings of international bodies at the global and regional levels and mobilization of civil society support through joint activities with NGOs. The Office had also continued to underscore the need to put the most vulnerable countries at the core of South-South cooperation, particularly through triangular arrangements. It was collaborating closely with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Special Unit for South-South Cooperation for that purpose. One recent example was the financial support provided by the Special Unit for a technical study on enhancing information and communication technology (ICT) connectivity in the Pacific small island developing States. Another priority area of work for the Office had been its close collaboration with UNDP aimed at establishing a physical presence of the United

Nations in each of the small island developing States in the Pacific.

4. Following the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the Office had identified five areas for special attention and follow-up action: disaster risk insurance, Global Environment Facility funding, disaster reduction and post-disaster assistance, ICT connectivity and the role of regional organizations of small island developing States. With regard to the first area, at the World Bank Small States Forum in 2005, the Office had highlighted the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy and encouraged active consideration of the proposal to establish a small States catastrophe risk insurance facility, advising that the World Bank/International Monetary Fund should become the lead agency to oversee its establishment. More recently, the Office had been working to facilitate access to funds available to small island developing States from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) administered by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). A special event being organized by the Office and OCHA in October 2006 would provide information on accessing those funds in the aftermath of natural disasters.

5. The Office was working with the World Tourism Organization to promote sustainable tourism — which featured prominently in the Mauritius Strategy — in small island developing States. In the area of ICT connectivity, the Office had been actively pursuing the possibility of establishing a dedicated satellite communications infrastructure for Pacific island countries through a joint project with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. A study of the technical, economic and commercial viability of that undertaking was currently under way.

6. His Office continued to stress the need for involvement of regional intergovernmental organizations in implementation of the Strategy, as well as the importance of engaging them more constructively in monitoring the implementation process. Monitoring should be not simply an exercise in stocktaking, but a proactive, dynamic and substantive process. The Office was also working to ensure better coordination and monitoring of United Nations activities in relation to the Mauritius Strategy through the organization of periodic meetings of the various funds, programmes and agencies involved.

7. With regard to disaster reduction, the Office had taken full advantage of the opportunity afforded by the Kobe World Conference on Disaster Reduction to highlight the extreme vulnerability of small island developing States to natural disasters, and was encouraged by the special attention given to such States under the priorities for action in the Hyogo Framework for Action. The Office was supporting the efforts of small island developing States to implement the Hyogo Framework. He urged all such States to designate their national focal points for implementation, follow-up and monitoring of progress on the Framework. The report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/61/229) could serve as a guideline for action in that regard. At the regional level, cooperation among small island developing States on disaster reduction was progressing. The Pacific island States had endorsed the Madang Framework for Action 2005-2015 and a regional database was being established. Member States of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States were implementing a regional disaster reduction programme.

8. He expressed appreciation to the Alliance of Small Island States for its global leadership in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The strong and continued political support of the members of the Alliance for the work of the United Nations system in relation to small island developing States was needed in order to have a positive impact in the international community, especially among development partners, United Nations organizations, international financial organizations, and regional and subregional organizations, as well as civil society and the private sector.

9. **The Chairperson** invited the Committee to resume the general discussion on the item.

10. **Mr. Nikitov** (Ukraine), speaking on behalf of the member States of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM), said that sustainable development was a key element for achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The GUAM States had therefore welcomed the agreements of the 2005 World Summit on a number of sustainable development

issues, including water and sanitation, climate change, biodiversity, technology transfer and capacity-building at all levels. They also remained committed to the full and timely implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. All four countries had adopted national programmes and strategies based on the Johannesburg Plan and on Agenda 21, which provided a blueprint for building national consensus around sustainable development and promoting economic growth, social development and a healthy environment. Their implementation was subject to regular monitoring, the results of which were disclosed to the public as means of raising awareness of sustainable development issues.

11. The GUAM States believed that sustainable development was an indispensable part of the work of the United Nations system and recognized the need for strengthened environmental governance, including the governance mechanisms of the United Nations Environment Programme. They also valued the ongoing efforts aimed at strengthening coordination within the United Nations system and attached paramount importance to the leadership of the United Nations in support of the Hyogo Framework for Action. The balanced design of the programme of work for the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, should lead to the adoption of practical policy decisions. Support for research and development, transfer of environmentally friendly technologies to developing countries on concessionary terms and capacity-building should be cross-cutting themes of those decisions.

12. **Ms. Laohaphan** (Thailand) noted from the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Agenda 21 (A/61/258) that many Governments had made sustainable development their core principle in charting the future course of their countries. Her delegation was also pleased to see from the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (A/61/25) that UNEP was emphasizing the promotion of energy efficiency, as energy security and fossil-fuel pollution would be among the main issues to be tackled during the twenty-first century.

13. Despite recent political events in her country, Thai international trade and investment policies remained the same, their ultimate aim being to generate sustainable economic growth. Thailand continued to be committed to multilateral trade negotiations and free trade agreements. The business environment remained stable and the economy was expected to show robust growth of 4.5 per cent in the last quarter of 2006.

14. Sustainable development with an emphasis on human and social development had long been an integral part of her country's National Economic and Social Development Plan, which embraced the sufficiency economy philosophy. That philosophy had led to sustainable agriculture practices which ensured food security for small-scale farmers even in times of agricultural price slumps. It also inspired more prudent financial practices, which would help to prevent the occurrence of an Asian financial crisis such as had occurred in 1997.

15. Thailand reaffirmed its commitment to global environment protection. It was a non-Annex I party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, and was in the process of implementing the clean development mechanism (CDM), including the development of CDM projects aimed at transforming biological and agriculture waste into energy. The country had also launched a campaign to promote public awareness of low-carbon activities at all levels, which included capacity-building programmes for communities and municipal leaders to enable them to tackle national concerns relating to energy efficiency, imported fuel supply and high fuel prices, and climate change. Thailand urged developed (Annex I) countries to assist developing countries by developing affordable technologies for renewable energy and alternative energy. Her Government also called on the United Nations organizations, particularly UNEP, to continue their role of capacity-building aimed at enhancing developing countries' ability to make use of clean energy, especially biofuel.

16. A particular environmental concern for her country was deterioration of ecosystems and fluctuation of water levels in the Mekong River Basin as a result of unsustainable use of natural resources. Thailand called on all stakeholders to cooperate in promoting the sustainable development and conservation of that area.

17. With regard to disaster preparedness and response, Thailand reaffirmed its commitment to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action. After the Asian tsunami in 2004, the Thai Government had set up a nationwide system of tsunami early warning centres. It had also contributed substantial seed funding

to the ESCAP Voluntary Trust Fund for the establishment of a regional tsunami early warning system. Thailand had dispatched relief assistance to countries affected by catastrophic disaster, such as the recent earthquakes in the region. It had supported the launch of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) regional standby arrangements for disaster relief and emergency response.

18. **Mr. Al-Manaseer** (Bahrain) said that there had been numerous international discussions, conferences, declarations and resolutions on sustainable development over the years. The main challenge faced by developing countries was the need for more financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building. Both North-South and South-South cooperation were necessary to implement the three economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. His country was trying to diversify its sources of income, while taking into account environmental concerns. Bahrain's Constitution provided for the welfare and freedom of its citizens based on gender equality and democracy, and its achievements had occupied a prominent place in United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) *Human Development Reports*.

19. **Mr. Ghandi** (India) said that India had a long-standing commitment to environmental protection. It had taken part in all the major environmental conferences and had participated in shaping international agreements to tackle global environmental issues. His Government was privileged to be hosting the Eighteenth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer; India's national environmental policy recognized that human beings were at the centre of sustainable development and that the right to development must equitably meet the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations. To that end, it sought to ensure that people benefited more from conservation than from resource degradation.

20. If developing countries were to attain the goals and targets of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the international community must make the means of implementation available and create an international environment supportive of development. Intellectual property rights and trade regimes, together with the conditionalities imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, were eroding the autonomy and flexibility of developing countries, hindering their ability to develop policies and strategies for economic growth and sustainable development. The current impasse in the Doha Round was a cause for concern. Developing countries had clearly been given to understand that trade-distorting agricultural subsidies would be phased out within a definite time frame, but the benefits of agricultural reform continued to elude them. Moreover, reducing agricultural tariffs and subsidies was not enough; there must be exceptions to allow developing countries to pursue their pro-development strategies and policies aimed at protecting their poor. Special and differential treatment for developing countries remained a categorical imperative.

21. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation recognized that good governance at the international level was fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development, and it emphasized the need to address international finance, trade, technology and investment patterns that impacted the development prospects of developing countries. The Secretary-General should be asked to prepare a report on that topic, including a detailed analysis of actions taken at the international level, for consideration at future sessions.

22. The thematic cluster of issues for the current implementation cycle of the multi-year work programme of the Commission on Sustainable Development, namely, energy, climate change and industrial development, including air pollution, were particularly relevant. In developing countries, a rapid increase in energy use per capita would be essential to realizing national development goals and the Millennium Development Goals. Developing countries must have the policy space to address their energy needs in the light of their individual circumstances. In particular, there needed to be a fresh assessment of nuclear energy as a clean and safe source of energy. Research and development were also needed to make modern renewable energy sources and energy-efficient technologies available to developing countries at affordable prices. Critical energy technologies remained beyond the reach of developing countries because of prohibitive costs under existing intellectual property rights regimes. Those regimes should be revisited with a view to making such technologies accessible to developing countries. The international community should also explore the possibility of establishing a clean technology acquisition fund for that purpose.

23. India recognized the importance of conservation, protection and sustainable use of genetic resources and

traditional knowledge, as well as equitable sharing of the benefits from their use, particularly for developing countries. His delegation endorsed the recommendation made in the report of the Secretary-General (A/61/225) that every effort should be made to conclude the negotiations for an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing by 2010.

24. The report on Mauritius Strategy implementation (A/61/277) demonstrated that small island developing States needed long-term attention in the areas of capacity-building and resource transfer. In the spirit of South-South solidarity, India was cooperating with such States in the areas of natural disaster preparedness and mitigation, resilience and capacity-building, and climate change. Its contribution, however, was intended to supplement the efforts of the international donor community, which must fulfil its commitments.

25. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) recalled that 2005 had been a year of tragedy, with a total of 360 disasters of varying kinds that had killed more than 90,000 people. Because of changing socio-economic conditions, rapid urbanization, environmental degradation, coastal land use and climatic risks, the number of disasters would continue to rise, along with their economic and social costs. That menace needed to be addressed expeditiously and appropriately.

26. Global warming was a major issue confronting humanity. If the current trend continued, the sea level worldwide would rise by another 10 inches by the end of the century. Millions of people on low-lying lands and islands in the Asia-Pacific region would become forced migrants or refugees. The consequences would be disproportionately shared by the least developed countries and other small and vulnerable economies that bore the exorbitant cost of damages perpetrated by others. The international community should undertake the necessary preventive and precautionary measures to avert that scourge.

27. Recent advances in science and technology had created enormous potential for developing an efficient system of disaster risk reduction and management. It was possible to track atmospheric depression and predict local weather conditions with a reasonable degree of accuracy, and thus to issue early warnings to people living in vulnerable areas. Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, including national platforms for disaster reduction, was crucial, as was cooperation among countries at regional and global levels for disaster risk reduction. Regional and global early warning systems were essential in order to build resilience to natural disasters. For developing and least developed countries, international support would be critical.

28. South Asia was vulnerable to natural disasters; between 2 and 16 per cent of the GDP of South Asian countries was lost every year due to natural calamities. The new Disaster Management Centre of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation would collect and disseminate data, indigenous knowledge and good practices, providing policy advice and facilitating capacity-building.

29. Bangladesh was a disaster-prone country, but the Government was committed to reducing its people's vulnerability to a manageable humanitarian level. Its Ministry of Food and Disaster Management dealt not only with disaster preparedness but also with rehabilitation and reconstruction. The Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme was a road map for the development of internal strategic plans for different government functions. Bangladesh was one of the first countries to institute such a national platform to guide risk reduction efforts, and thus brought a paradigm shift in disaster management, from the conventional response and relief approach to a more comprehensive risk reduction culture.

30. The policies and programmes undertaken by Bangladesh had proved effective. For example, a cyclone in November 1970 had caused 300,000 deaths, while the death toll of a comparable cyclone in September 1997 had been 11. Bangladesh was ready to share its experiences and best practices with countries in similar situations. As building global partnerships and collaboration would be imperative, it was to be hoped that the international solidarity forged in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami would continue.

31. **Mr. Liu** Zhenmin (China) said China agreed with the Secretary-General that sustainable development could be truly described as a global undertaking, embraced and implemented by stakeholders across the world. The developing countries in particular had taken unprecedented steps by integrating sustainable development into their national development strategies, accelerating reforms, mobilizing all social forces, and building extensive partnerships.

32. However, the situation of global sustainable development was still rather grim. Environmental

degradation, ecological damage, land deterioration, persistent poverty and infectious diseases still existed. The uneven economic development among States, and among different regions of individual countries, had become more marked. The economic vulnerability of the least developed countries was worsening, environmental pressure was heavier, and the achievement of sustainable development remained a long-term and arduous task.

33. Two essential areas needed improvement. Firstly, national Governments needed to act in accordance with their countries' level of development, formulating their own sustainable development strategies. At the same time, economic, legal and administrative measures had to be applied comprehensively to enhance implementation. Developing countries were faced with enormous pressure and difficulties, but for the benefit of future generations they needed to adopt innovative measures, and mobilize national resources and forces to achieve sustained economic growth.

34. Secondly, it was necessary to build global partnerships and strengthen international cooperation. Achieving sustainable development demanded a breadth of actions without precedent, while countries' level of development, capacity for governance, and financial and technical situation varied widely. Conventional concepts could no longer meet current needs. Both Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation therefore contained explicit provisions to the effect that developing countries should receive financial assistance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies on preferential terms. If the global process of sustainable development was to succeed, the developed countries needed to make good on their pledges.

35. China had acted with determination in fulfilling its commitments to sustainable development. While maintaining fairly rapid economic growth, it had made unremitting efforts to adjust its industrial structure, improve energy efficiency and protect the environment, with a view to accelerating the creation of an energy-saving and environmentally sound society. Under the current five-year plan, by 2010, while per capita GDP would be twice that of 2000, energy consumption per unit of GDP would be 20 per cent lower than at the end of 2005. It would require arduous efforts to achieve those objectives: China would try its utmost and hoped to receive strong support from the international community.

36. The development of small island developing States was an important part of global sustainable development. Consequently, the international community should fulfil its financial commitment to them and accelerate technology transfer, especially of technologies for developing and using cost-effective and substitute forms of energy. It was also essential to promote capacity-building for small island developing States, especially in such areas as improving energy efficiency, evaluating vulnerability and formulating strategies for adaptation to climate change. In order to address the fundamental fears of small island developing States, practical measures should be adopted to help them better respond to the disastrous consequences of sea level rise and extreme weather events.

37. In the age of globalization, international and regional cooperation was essential for warding off and responding to natural disasters. It was therefore necessary to work in four specific areas. Firstly, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 should be conscientiously implemented. Secondly, regional cooperation mechanisms for disaster monitoring should be constructed. Thirdly, the exchange and sharing of disaster reduction information and experience should be enhanced. Fourthly, support should be increased to assist developing countries with capacity-building. With a view to providing such assistance, the Chinese Government was currently working hard on the establishment of the Asian Regional Research Centre on Catastrophe.

38. The international community must comprehensively implement the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol and encourage a harmonious conclusion of the talks on post-2012 greenhouse emissions reduction targets. China called on the developed countries concerned to face up squarely to their historical responsibility for the current high emission levels, to pledge to take further emission reduction measures after 2012 and to strengthen technical cooperation with and transfer of technology to developing countries.

39. China supported the efforts to strengthen UNEP and improve its efficiency and authority. The relevant measures should promote coordinated development of national economic, social and environmental protection, and in particular meet the special needs of developing countries, so as to improve their overall capacity to deal with environment-related issues.

40. **Ms. Blum** (Colombia) said that disaster mitigation must take into account the parameters of sustainable development, in order to integrate the actions taken to protect the population on the one hand with the goals of economic and social development and comprehensive environmental management on the other. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction was thus an important framework to support the efforts of national bodies. Colombia also supported the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, stressing the importance of strengthening coordination and cooperation among the different actors participating in the early warning systems, and adequately integrating their activities and knowledge, in accordance with the agreements reached at the second World Conference on Disaster Reduction.

41. Using its National System for the Prevention of and Reaction to Disasters, Colombia had been able to make progress in risk management, community training and development of early warning systems and in general reduce the vulnerability of the population to natural disasters. The Climate Change Office in the Ministry of the Environment, Housing and Territorial Development gave advice on the viability of projects framed to deal with climate change. To date, seven complete projects had been submitted, while others were in the drafting stage. They related primarily to hydroelectric and wind energy, or to management of forests.

42. The Colombian Forester Families Programme to combat the felling of tropical forests and the Amazon jungle provided for a Government subsidy that had allowed 43,000 families to replace illicit crops by alternative crops. Technical assistance provided had made it possible to adopt collective solutions to environmental issues such as watershed recovery and pollution control, with actions supported by the sustainable use of natural resources.

43. As one of the countries recognized as megadiverse by UNEP, Colombia considered it important to examine the link between climate change and loss of biodiversity, a phenomenon that jeopardized the future welfare of humanity. The United Nations must identify and diagnose the consequences of climate change on life in its different manifestations. When they understood all the dimensions of climate change, the nations of the world could resolve to undertake, without delay, effective actions to confront a phenomenon that generated disasters, increased development vulnerability and created risks for the sustainability of societies.

44. *Mr. Fonseca (Brazil), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

45. **Mr. Snowden** (United States of America) said that the Commission on Sustainable Development had redefined itself as a body focused on translating the words negotiated in forums such as the present meeting into actions and results on the ground. The Commission's successes since the 2002 World Summit had demonstrated its unique added value in the collective efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals. By establishing clearly focused cycles, first on water and now on energy, the Commission had galvanized action in a wide range of organizations around the globe, effectively integrating the economic, social, and environmental aspects of sustainable development. It had also had a catalyzing effect, by endorsing sustainable development partnerships. Those partnerships and initiatives were starting to deliver concrete results. For example, with the assistance of the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles and the World Bank, all 49 sub-Saharan African countries had stopped refining and importing leaded gasoline by the end of 2005. The Commission's Learning Centre had provided on-site capacity-building courses to more than 1,500 participants over the past three years. Its Partnerships Fair had provided space for action-oriented, multi-stakeholder discussions on more than 100 partnerships.

46. The Commission was also collecting and disseminating lessons learned and best practices. Its sessions and its Matrix had created new opportunities for exchanging practical solutions to sustainable development challenges, through excellent Web-based tools designed to disseminate information in a user-friendly manner. But there was still more progress to be made. His delegation hoped that the Commission would continue to devote its meeting time and resources to translating countries' sustainable development blueprints into on-the-ground results.

47. In the past year, international environmental governance had been under discussion in at least two forums — the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence and the General Assembly's Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for the UN's Environmental Activities. Judging from the work of those groups, there was a

diversity of opinions on what constituted improvements to international environmental governance.

48. While the United States supported incorporating environmental concerns into development work, it agreed with other Governments that no new environment institution was needed. Major structural changes would lead to a divisive and time-consuming debate, distracting the United Nations from making valuable progress in areas where a clear consensus existed. A package of measures had been adopted by UNEP some years previously, aimed at improving coordination, efficiency and funding. Recently, some very positive developments had been seen within UNEP, such as the adoption of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building. Those new policies should be given the time and opportunity to succeed. The existing system of multilateral environmental agreements reflected a good balance of coordination and decentralization. A supranational authority must not interfere with the good work of those agreements by exercising control over them or adding additional bureaucratic layers, as the principal responsibility for environmental governance must lie with national Governments.

49. **Mr. Aisi** (Papua New Guinea) said that the international community had progressed from the broad statements of principles and commitments in Agenda 21 to the more focused goals of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development Goals.

50. Although countries needed to take responsibility for implementing the sustainable development commitments, they also required the support of development partners, including the United Nations, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders. Papua New Guinea welcomed the assistance of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and Italy in developing National Sustainable Development Strategies for Pacific Island countries.

51. At its fourteenth session, the Commission on Sustainable Development had identified the obstacles in the way of achieving sustainable development and had highlighted the importance of renewable energy and the need to promote alternative fuel sources. For their part, the Pacific Island countries had taken advantage of the session to gather information from the various experts on the availability of affordable and environmentally-friendly technologies.

52. The review of the Mauritius Strategy should cover: actions taken to date to implement paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 60/194 regarding manpower capacity constraints in the Small Island Developing States Unit; actions to fulfil the commitments made at the Mauritius International Meeting; and the development of a mechanism that would identify affordable renewable energy sources and other technologies that small island developing States could use to address their development challenges. An effective link between the United Nations system and regional and national mechanisms was vital for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. In that regard, Papua New Guinea was concerned that the United Nations system appeared to be focusing more on monitoring the implementation of the Strategy than on actual implementation.

53. As a high-risk country, Papua New Guinea needed to develop national policies and institutions to deal with disaster-related issues. It therefore welcomed the support of the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission, UNDP and other development partners.

54. Climate change was an even more serious issue. Every effort should be made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and stabilize their concentration in the atmosphere at a level that prevented dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Papua New Guinea looked forward to receiving assistance from the Global Environment Facility and other agencies in protecting its rich terrestrial and marine biodiversity resources.

55. *Ms. Intelmann (Estonia) resumed the Chair.*

56. **Mr. Mubin** (Malaysia) said he was pleased to note from the Secretary-General's report (A/61/258) that progress had been made towards achieving sustainable development over recent years, and welcomed the report's recommendations that Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and major groups should deepen their commitment to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The Commission on Sustainable Development should continue to function as the high-level body on sustainable development within the United Nations system. Malaysia wished to reaffirm its commitment to achieving the targets set in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and Agenda 21, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. It continued to take

appropriate measures to ensure that its development was sustainable and balanced.

57. With regard to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, he said that most developing countries lacked the capacity and the financial resources to minimize the impact of disasters on the local population. Malaysia therefore urged the relevant United Nations organizations to work in a more coordinated fashion with Member States in order to ensure that international engagement in disaster reduction was sustained over the long term. United Nations agencies should cooperate closely with Malaysia and other countries in the region to develop improved early warning capacities. Furthermore, the existing bureaucratic procedures, policy frameworks and Government-to-Government aid mechanisms were inadequate.

58. The many natural disasters witnessed in recent years clearly indicated the need to pay serious attention to climate change and to global warming in particular. The international community must find the collective political will to implement agreed commitments effectively. Malaysia therefore urged annex I countries to transfer their climate-friendly technologies to the non-annex I countries as part of measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. If annex-I countries took more concrete and positive measures, the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol would be achieved more rapidly.

59. International cooperation was essential to assist countries to explore fully the potential of their biologically diverse resources. Access to, and the transfer of relevant technology and expertise, especially from developed partners, was also essential. Malaysia was also concerned about bio-piracy, since a large share of the world's biodiversity was found in developing countries. In order to maintain the integrity of the world's ecosystems, an equitable solution should be found jointly by countries with abundant biodiversity resources and countries with the necessary resources, scientific knowledge and technological expertise. Malaysia was also mindful of the need to ensure the involvement and participation of all members of society, especially local communities.

60. **Mr. Tarragô** (Brazil) said that his country had been an active participant in the World Summit on Sustainable Development at Johannesburg and the annual sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development. It looked forward to concrete progress in the treatment of the cluster of themes at the Commission's fifteenth session, namely climate change, air pollution/atmosphere, industrial development and energy for sustainable development.

61. With respect to climate change in particular, it was difficult for the international community to agree on collective action owing to uncertainty, market imperfections and weak representation of those most affected by the problem. It was essential, however, that the developing countries should gain access to cleaner, low-emission and cost-effective technologies through innovative mechanisms and expansion of South-South cooperation.

62. The replacement of fossil fuels by biofuels represented the most effective and cost-efficient way to mitigate the greenhouse effect. Brazil was the world's largest producer of ethanol made from sugar cane, and ethanol currently accounted for more than 40 per cent of its fuel consumption for transportation.

63. Brazil supported the resolution being put forward by the Association of Caribbean States which recognized the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development. It was also in favour of strengthening international cooperation to help the most vulnerable countries, especially small island developing countries and those suffering from desertification, to combat environmental threats.

64. Brazil was implementing an integrated sustainable forest management policy that promoted the value of the native forest and supported the socio-economic development of the neighbouring communities. Significant reductions in deforestation rates had been achieved and the Government remained committed to achieving a permanent decrease in deforestation.

65. In the spirit of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Brazil believed that the world's industrial core should create incentives for the developing world to invest in new technologies with low carbon emissions. The industrialized nations needed to provide significant amounts of assistance and affordable access to technology to help the developing countries meet the challenging tasks of industrialization and urbanization.

66. At the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, it

had been decided to submit for consideration by the General Assembly a draft resolution proclaiming 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity. Brazil looked forward to the adoption of the draft resolution under item 53 (f) of the agenda.

67. **Mr. Amil** (Pakistan) pointed out that the danger to the planet's environment was currently far greater than it had been in 1992, when Agenda 21 had been adopted. The process of globalization had accentuated economic asymmetries, so that an increasing number of people lived precariously balanced on the edge of subsistence.

68. In 2005, the world's political leaders had committed themselves at the World Summit collectively to fight poverty and under-development. Unfortunately, the development consensus was not sufficiently ambitious, and there had been little progress in implementation of the agreed commitments reflected in the Millennium Development Goals.

69. Pakistan was committed to the promotion of rapid and equitable development for the welfare of its people and had integrated the goals of sustainable development into its policies. Its National Environment Policy dealt with: conservation and efficient management of environmental resources; integration of environmental considerations into policy-making; and creation of mass awareness and community mobilization for environmental protection and sustainability. Pakistan was also preparing a National Sustainable Development Strategy, which would aim at simultaneous growth and protection of the environment.

70. Pakistan supported the recommendation in the Secretary-General's report in document A/61/258, calling on donor Governments and international financial institutions to support developing countries' efforts to overcome barriers and constraints identified during the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

71. Pakistan had been a consistent promoter of compressed natural gas (CNG) as fuel for transport and was the third largest user of CNG in the world. In line with the recommendation of the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, it would continue its efforts and planned to increase the number of vehicles using CNG fuel from the current number of 280,000 to at least 800,000 by 2015.

72. The world was witnessing a significant increase in the magnitude and intensity of natural disasters. The earthquake in Pakistan in 2005, and the Indian Ocean tsunami at the end of 2004 were just two recent examples, which together had killed more than 353,000 people. However, important steps had also been taken in 2005 in the area of disaster preparedness and risk reduction, including the establishment of a consortium of International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system partners, at the Third International Conference on Early Warning. For its part, Pakistan had established a National Disaster Management Agency.

73. Climate change was resulting in glacier melting, floods, mudslides and rising sea levels. Increased international technological and financial cooperation was imperative for the protection of the environment. Pakistan was in favour of strengthening UNEP, as the lead United Nations agency responsible for spearheading such efforts. Observing that the UNEP Secretariat was being reorganized, Pakistan hoped that the principles of transparency and equitable geographical representation would be followed in making fresh appointments at all locations and at all levels.

74. Little progress had been made in implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building. Its immediate and full implementation was essential for efforts aimed at sustained economic growth and poverty eradication. Pakistan also wished to stress the importance of a timely and sustainable fourth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility.

75. In promoting the goals of sustainable development, the highest priority for developing countries was the elimination of poverty. No resources should be diverted from that goal. There was a need for adequate resources to be devoted to environmental protection in accordance with the principles of the Rio Conference on Environment and Development and Agenda 21, in addition to those committed to promoting development goals. Developing countries must be assisted to build the capacity for sustainable development, with urgent measures to permit them to acquire the relevant technology. Finally, the main responsibility for environmental degradation rested on those who consumed most and polluted most. The "polluter pays" principle must be respected.

76. **Mr. Mansour** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Millennium Development Goals Report 2006 noted the alarming fact that more people were going hungry

despite the decline in poverty. The global partnership for development needed to be strengthened if the Millennium Development Goals were to be achieved and the Governments of the developing countries needed to adopt appropriate national policies to change their structures and upgrade technologies.

77. The Iranian Government supported the Secretary-General's proposal for a Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction as well as his recommendations on strengthening the Strategy system. There should be more practical steps to reduce risks through research activities and technology transfers and more reliable financial resources to support the implementation of the Strategy, including through the regular United Nations budget. In order to promote international cooperation, oral and written reports needed to address all types of natural disasters, including those with geological causes.

78. The Iranian Government reaffirmed the important role of UNEP in the achievement of environmental sustainability and stressed the need to implement the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building as well as the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management adopted by the UNEP Governing Council. It welcomed the successful fourth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility but expressed concern that some major donors had reduced their contribution levels. Larger contributions would be needed to implement the numerous projects in the pipeline and to achieve Millennium Development Goal 7 by 2015.

79. **Ms. Yang** (Palau) said that the Mauritius Strategy provided an opportunity for the people of Palau to define their sustainable development goals. It proposed concrete initiatives which could be used to focus donor contributions and encourage the mainstreaming of the interests of small island States into the work of the United Nations and other international agencies.

80. Her delegation was pleased to note the prominent place given in the Strategy to tourism and biodiversity, which for Palau were inextricably linked. Tourism was an essential contributor to its economy, but depended on the beauty of its oceans, which in turn provided food not only for domestic consumption but also for export. Palau was committed to the promotion of biodiversity and called on other nations to make it a priority. Together with the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau had created the Micronesia Challenge: each country had agreed to set aside 30 per cent of its near-shore marine resources and 20 per cent of its land for conservation by 2010. In order to achieve its goals, however, Palau would require both funding and expertise.

81. The preservation of biodiversity did not end at the edge of each island's exclusive economic zone. The 14 nations of the Pacific Islands Forum were united in their call for an interim prohibition on destructive fishing practices, including deep-sea bottom trawling, in unregulated areas beyond national jurisdiction. Palau urged all responsible nations to echo its call for a prohibition on bottom trawling in areas where effective conservation and management measures were not yet in place to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems.

82. Because of the Mauritius Strategy's overemphasis on regionalism, the needs of individual States were often overlooked. One of the Strategy's core goals was to promote national capacity-building by aligning international assistance with the special needs of individual small island developing States. However, Palau had instead been subjected to a complex arrangement in which remote centres made decisions that failed to address its needs. Moreover, Palau still lacked a United Nations presence on the ground, and had therefore combined with several of its neighbours to create the "UN Presence Initiative" which called for the establishment of a United Nations presence on their territories. Palau had therefore been pleased to learn that the United Nations planned to expand its presence in the region, and looked forward to the timely fulfilment of that commitment.

83. **Mr. Manor** (Israel) said that Israel's approach to the implementation of sustainable development focused on actions that promoted change rather than relying on traditional mechanisms. Agents for change were empowered within the Government, and emphasis was placed on actions and achievements which would ultimately be integrated into mainstream policies and produce new procedures and regulations.

84. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction aimed to build disaster-resilient communities by promoting increased awareness of the importance of disaster reduction as an integral component of sustainable development. Public awareness could be achieved only through education and training, as well as through the production of compelling evidence, for example regarding long-term weather and climate

trends. Israel was among the leading States in the Middle East region in gathering such data, notably through the GLOWA Jordan River project and a project to monitor the deformations of the Earth's crust. If more countries in the region would participate in those projects, awareness would be raised even further.

85. Disaster reduction was achieved by setting standards that would reduce the effects of a disaster, such as an earthquake, and by building the capacity to reduce loss of life if a disaster occurred. Israel had been developing risk-reduction standards based on European and American standards, notably to address the two main risks to the region: earthquakes and water shortages. It had also developed civilian commercial satellites which could provide near real-time information about the magnitude of a disaster anywhere in the world.

86. Israel welcomed the opportunity to engage in discussions on the first review process of the Kyoto Protocol at the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to be held in Nairobi in November 2006. The sharing of information regarding the preparatory work being carried out might be beneficial. An urgent response was required to meet the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as it was clear that increased reductions of greenhouse gas emissions were necessary in order to halt global warming.

87. It was the responsibility of all parties to the Kyoto Protocol to help reduce those emissions. Implementation of the Protocol and its mechanisms had produced notable achievements, but those achievements would be in vain if further commitment periods were not within the framework of the Protocol. A committee should be established to conduct the first review, and should include representatives of developed and developing States Parties. Review criteria should be prepared while taking into account the special circumstances and individual needs of each State Party.

88. The commitments proposed for non-annex I countries should be voluntary, taking into consideration the social, economic and environmental situation of the specific country. Voluntary activities for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions undertaken since 1989 must be acknowledged and recognized within the framework of future commitment periods and taken into account, in a manner agreed in advance by the Parties, as part of the fulfilment of future obligations. Such recognition of voluntary reductions might give States Parties an incentive to take steps beyond their obligations under the Protocol, but the status of voluntary activities in future processes should be guaranteed only when such activities were compatible with the objectives and principles of the Convention and its Protocol.

89. **Archbishop Migliore** (Observer for the Holy See) said that, if sustainable development was to become a long-term reality, it was necessary to build a truly sustainable economy. Moreover, economies essentially depended on their relationship to nature. Therefore, rather than being regarded as external or marginal to the economy, environmental concerns must be understood by policymakers as the basis on which all economic — even human — activity rested. That was why fulfilment of the commitments made at the 1992 Earth Summit was the very minimum response required of States and all relevant environmental actors.

90. The environmental question was not only an important ethical and scientific problem, but also a political and economic problem and a controversial issue in the process of globalization. Not only should sustainable development be integrated into programmes for poverty reduction and development, but environmental problems should be reflected in security strategies and developmental and humanitarian questions at the national, regional and international levels.

91. His delegation therefore welcomed the progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It appeared that greater emphasis was being placed on renewable energy, fuels and clean technologies and mainstreaming of national sustainable development strategies into policymaking. However, States must do much more to halt and reverse current trends in consumption and pollution. The issues of energy for sustainable development, climate change, industrial development and atmospheric pollution had an obvious environmental impact, with broad implications for national and international security, as well as for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The international community should also continue to deepen its understanding of the

links between peace and human development, above all in the poorest sectors, which had less capacity to adapt.

92. The Holy See also welcomed the momentum achieved in the Marrakesh Process, which would encourage the application of a global and shared long-term energy strategy. In the meantime, serious public investment in clean technology must accompany the use of fossil fuels, as an essential part of national and international strategies to reduce the impact of air and sea transport pollution, as well as those sectors' use of outdated technologies. Governance of water resources must be based on the principle of shared responsibility at the international level, with particular attention to the principle of subsidiarity, which required the participation of local communities in decision-making. The international community must also reverse the alarming phenomenon of desertification, through coordinated responses. Lastly, the rural sector, upon which three quarters of the world depended, was suffering increasing degradation. Policymakers could not continue to treat the rural world as second class.

93. **Mr. Cheok** (Singapore) said that, although some progress had been made in the development of alternative power sources, fossil fuels remained the primary means of power generation. That situation had created problems such as volatile fuel prices, which affected businesses and created uncertainty for all the world's economies. Those concerns were very real for Singapore, as an island State. However, having achieved some success in managing its water resources, it hoped for similar success in its energy and waste-management initiatives.

94. Climate change was a major global environmental challenge, and an area in which Singapore wished to play a major role, as demonstrated by its accession to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. It had a national climate change strategy, as well as a national climate change committee which included representatives of the public and private sectors. Other domestic measures included encouraging citizens to be more energy efficient and to use cleaner, less carbon-intensive fuels and encouraging companies to explore alternative technologies. Market mechanisms such as the clean development mechanism provided for in the Kyoto Protocol offered cost-effective ways to reduce emissions, but they could not be effective without an environment of certainty and stability. The reduction of air pollution was among Singapore's main objectives. Although its overall ambient air quality compared favourably with that of major world cities, the level of fine particulate matter in the air was an emerging problem and had been linked to respiratory and heart disease. The Government was therefore taking steps to encourage a shift from diesel oil to compressed natural gas.

95. Large areas of Southeast Asia, including Singapore, were suffering a severe deterioration in air quality due to the haze caused by illegal forest fires in parts of Sumatra and West Kalimantan in Indonesia. Although Indonesia's President had acknowledged his country's responsibility for the problem, some members of the Indonesian Government and Parliament had taken more short-sighted views. Indonesia should take firm and effective measures to deal with the haze, including introducing more environmentally friendly land-clearance techniques and ratifying the Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Failure to deal effectively with the problem would affect Indonesia's international credibility, as well as its appeal to foreign investors. Singapore and other ASEAN countries had offered to help but international assistance, including from the United Nations, would also be required.

96. Singapore would continue to seek innovative ways to derive clean energy for development, enhance air quality and contribute to climate change initiatives, but the international community as a whole must take concerted action to deal with those concerns. Balancing environmental sustainability and economic development would be one of the major challenges of the twenty-first century.

97. **Ms. Moses** (Nauru) said that the people of Nauru were committed to rebuilding their nation following a century of phosphate mining and placed great hope in the Mauritius Strategy. Nauru had recently conducted an assessment of its national sustainable development strategy and had identified areas where improvements could be made, such as the need for indicators to measure and evaluate its performance and to educate its citizens about sustainable development. Nauru's achievement of sustainability depended on ensuring the proper use of fish stocks and oceans, managing waste, finding cleaner energy sources and rehabilitating land.

98. However, Nauru could not succeed alone. It urgently needed independent, solid expertise from

donor partners to develop and maintain renewable and clean energy sources. For donor countries looking for ways to offset greenhouse gas emissions, Nauru presented an excellent opportunity for real reductions. However, efforts to achieve sustainable development would be in vain if the international community continued to ignore the impact of climate change. Nauru therefore urged the United Nations to accelerate its efforts in that regard by placing the issue at the centre of its agenda.

99. Because of their isolated geographical situation, small island developing States such as Nauru often found themselves isolated from the infrastructure and resources of the United Nations. A number of improvements should therefore be made in the United Nations system. The role of the Alliance of Small Island States in the system should be strengthened through the establishment of a legal structure designed to formalize collaboration and coordination of issues relating to small island developing States, including implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Second, the United Nations presence in smaller Pacific States such as Nauru should be expanded. Third, the Mauritius Strategy should be integrated into the appropriate United Nations human rights and climate change frameworks.

100. Nauru recognized its responsibility to improve its own system of governance, and continued to implement the necessary reforms. However, many of the international commitments aimed at supporting its international development had lacked transparency and had been accompanied by unrealistic demands. The process of accessing funds for development assistance should be simplified and a more independent and transparent analysis provided of what constituted effective development aid. The Mauritius Strategy was one of many useful blueprints for sustainable development, but small island States had seen little if any action since the 2005 Mauritius Summit. There was therefore a need to find better ways to implement the sustainable development agenda, promote action and find more concrete mechanisms for change. Nauru wished to reach the point at which it no longer depended on other nations to administer its energy systems and provide its infrastructure. However, it was still far from achieving such independence, and appealed to the international community to help it rebuild.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.